



MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING
Tuesday, April 21, 2009, 5:00 PM
Council Chambers,
Oconee County Administrative Offices
415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. Reg Dexter, District V, Council Chairman
Mr. Joel Thrift, District IV, Vice Chairman
Mr. Mario Suarez, District III, Chairman Pro Tem
Mr. George Blanchard District I
Mr. Wayne McCall, District II

Oconee County Council met for a Public Hearing on Tuesday, April 21, 2009 at 5:00 PM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all members present [except Mr. Suarez and Mr. McCall], Thomas L. Martin County Attorney and Elizabeth G. Hulse, Clerk to Council present.

Press:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, and the County Council website [www.oconeese.com/council]. In addition it was made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Member of the press present: Peter Kent, WSNW Radio & Carlos Galarza - Daily Journal.

Call to Order:

Mr. Dexter called the meeting to order at 5:57 p.m.

Presentation:

Mr. Art Holbrooks opened with a PowerPoint Presentation [copy filed with these minutes] that explained the changes that were made to Ordinance #2009-03.

Mr. Thrift announced after further study and meetings with Mr. Suarez and several residents, there will be a proposal made at tonight's Council meeting for an amendment to the ZEO for a ridgeline ordinance pass the 750ft buffer zone on Lake Keowee. Mr. Thrift stated that any structure greater than 65ft will be prohibited in this area. Mr. Thrift stated that he has spoken with County Attorney, Mr. Tom Martin about working with Mr. Art Holbrooks, Oconee County Planning Director to devise criteria to be followed and used in the state ridgeline law.

Mr. Blanchard commented about not being invited to meetings where the ridgeline ordinance was discussed, however, he stated that he thinks that the ordinance is a good move. Mr. Blanchard addressed Council reminding them of the original proposal that was made in February or March of 2006, stating that the ridgeline ordinance has merit for consideration but there is a lot of work that needs to be done before it can be utilized.

Public Comment Session:

Mr. John Little addressed Council reading from a statement that will be filed with the permanent record as part of the minutes. In this statement, Mr. Little commented about his concerns with the Council being a representative all citizens and the two year battle that has been going on concerning Zoning and Overlays that he feels isn't needed.

Mr. Jim Schoonover addressed Council stating his support of the 1300 ft setback. Mr. Schoonover showed examples through a PowerPoint presentation [copy filed with these minutes] as to why a 1300 ft setback would provide better regulation to keep the lakes beautiful.

Mr. Gary Owens addressed Council representing the Advocates for Quality Development. Mr. Owens stated their support of the ZEO and overlays and encouraged Council to continue their hard work to implement them as planned.

Mr. Richard Hughes addressed Council reading from a statement that will be filed with the permanent record as part of the minutes. In this statement, Mr. Hughes stated his concerns involving proposed changes to Ordinance 2007-18.

Mr. Jerry Barnett addressed Council voicing his concerns about lake front inhabitants not being concerned about the other citizens that live in Oconee County. Mr. Barnett also voiced his concerns about the County government violating the rights of American citizens.

Mr. Richard Danforth addressed Council reading from a statement that will be filed with the permanent record as part of the minutes. In this statement, Mr. Danforth gave reasons for his support of the 1300 ft boundary on Lake Keowee. Mr. Danforth concluded by urging Council to continue its traditions of care practices concerning Lake Keowee's future by rejecting any motion to reduce the 1300ft boundary.

Mr. Steve MacLeod addressed Council representing the Mountain Lakes Community Association (MCLA). Mr. MacLeod congratulated Council for their leadership in the ZEO enactment and commented on their support of it. In conclusion, Mr. MacLeod stated that the MCLA hopes all citizens will utilize the ZEO to request zoning protections.

Mr. Tom Markovich addressed Council informing them of the previous delay of Ordinance #2009-03 and some of the reasons. Mr. Markovich stated that he feels that there many specifics that need to be sorted out before the ordinance is implemented. Mr. Markovich also stated that he is in favor of the buffers and that 25ft is very reasonable but stated there are also potential problems here that need to be sorted out.

Mr. Devoe Blackston addressed council stating that he has heard from many citizens wondering why there isn't a referendum- why they don't have a voice. Mr. Blackston stated that there are many citizens who have not been heard or represented concerning this matter. Mr. Blackston asked Council to consider the citizens that have not been heard and realize that this affects all citizens. Mr. Blackston concluded by thanking Council for listening and having an open mind.

Ms. Sharon Hamilton addressed Council representing the people of Port Santorini. Ms. Hamilton thanked Council for their hard work and stated their support of the ZEO, the revised wording of the 25ft buffer and the Keowee/Jocassee overlay.

Ms. Ginger Tidman addressed Council thanking them and the Planning Commission for being responsive to the citizens who represented the desires and wants of the people in the Fair Play community. Ms. Tidman asked Council for the same consideration to the many people who are impacted by the lake overlay including reconsideration of the distance that the overlay applies to.

Mr. Dexter opened the floor for additional comments from citizens who hadn't signed up prior to the meeting.

Mr. Phil Soper addressed Council thanking them for their work on the ZEO. Mr. Soper stated his concerns about future financial challenges. Mr. Soper stated that there will be a need for more money, questioning where the money will come from. Mr. Soper urged Council to keep in mind that there are long range issues at hand that will require the support of the people.

Mr. Ben Turetzky, Executive Director of FOLKS (Friends of Lake Keowee Society) addressed Council stating their support of the ZEO and overlay. Mr. Turetzky stated that this will give his organization the opportunity to do something along the same lines with Pickens County. Mr. Turetzky stated his concerns with the buffer enactment and informed Council that they will be working with individuals and communities around the lake to talk about the ways that individuals can economically retrofit their property and install a lake protective buffer.

Mr. John Little addressed Council with concerns about buffers. Mr. Little informed Council that when looking at the ZEO the deed must also be looked at carefully. Mr. Little stated that there are too many problems with the ZEO, it should be thrown out and if it is desired in the future, let the public decide.

Adjourn:

Mr. Dexter made a motion at 5:57 p.m., seconded by Mr. Thrift that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Stacy Crosby
Sen. Administrative Asst.